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College research restudied

'Star Wars' work draws increasing fire from some

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Opportunities for professors to perform secret, defense-related research on campus is increasing as a result of the government's interest in the Strategic Defense Initiative and similar programs. Opposition to such research is increasing, too.

Analysis As a result of the opposition, and because rules banning classified studies may prevent needed "peaceful" research, the University of Michigan and other schools are re-evaluating rules governing faculty participation in such projects.

University of Michigan President Harold T. Shapiro named a 12-member, faculty-student panel to examine U-M research guidelines after the school was forced to reject government-backed studies into ways of encouraging arms' control limitations.

THE PANEL'S findings are due next month. Some panel members already have suggested there will be "a little loosening" of restrictions, but no major changes.

"All of us realize this is one of the most sensitive issues the universities face," said Dr. James V. Neel, a panel member and a professor emeritus of human genetics. "Classified research is an issue all over the country. Universities are examining this issue under a lot of stress and strain."

At Harvard University, Nadav Safran, the head of the university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, came under fire for failing to reveal \$152,000 of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funds he received for an academic conference and research on his

latest book. Because of the outcry from his colleagues, Safran will resign this summer as head of the center, although he will remain a tenured professor.

At Michigan State University, John Masterson, a mathematics professor, tried unsuccessfully to prevent the awarding of a \$740,000 CIA research grant to a colleague. The university trustees rejected his plea and accepted the contract for Professor Shui Nee Chow, who will conduct unclassified research in a highly theoretical field of mathematics.

"A UNIVERSITY is supposed to be a place that values the free exchange of ideas and the Central Intelligence Agency is one of these agencies in the U.S. government that is the least associated with those values," Masterson said. "To the university, the grant represents money and no university is going to turn down money."

His statement goes to the root of the argument and is based on the traditional view of the university as a place where information is disseminated openly for peaceful purposes. While not necessarily

contradicting that notion, others stress that universities do not exist in vacuums and should reflect the needs of the federal government, which supplies much of their funding. They argue that much defense-related research is basic and has applications that transcend their use for weaponry.

Jerry Roschwap, an official with the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, said many universities are concerned with the issue but

are bending the rules or making them vague enough to allow some classified and defense-related research.

"I find that it's a mixed bag situation," Roschwap said. "Some schools that will not undertake any classified research on campus handle classified information and do research off campus."

AN EXAMPLE Roschwap gave was the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where the primary research for the Reagan administration's "Star Wars" anti-missile shield, is being conducted. Roschwap said researchers flow back and forth between the laboratory and the University of California at Berkeley, which has guidelines similar to those at U-M. "It's a peculiar kind of thing (classified research), but universities are peculiar kinds of places. No one really knows how to handle it."

At the University of Michigan classified and defense-related research has been generating controversy since the Vietnam War era. The U-M rules, adopted in 1972, ban research projects that could lead to killing or maiming human beings, and of classified research that cannot be published within a year of completion.

Despite the guidelines and an extensive review process involving students, faculty and staff, the university's decisions on some projects have regularly drawn fire from student protesters and the researchers themselves.

THE APPOINTMENT of the review committee was prompted in part by last summer's rejection of a proposal by Raymond Tanter, a U-M political science professor. A former Reagan administration arms control official, Tanter wanted to look at ways of reaching arms control agreements through means other than formal treaties.

However, the research would have involved using classified documents that may have prevented the results from being published within a year. Thus university rules prohibited it.

"I think it's the height of irony when a project to study ways in which arms control might be possible cannot be carried out because of an outdated policy to prevent faculty members from making weapons for the Vietnam War," Tanter said.

Tanter favors keeping the present guidelines, but with the qualification that they be nonbinding and left up to the interpretation of the researchers.

"Have faith in the faculty," he said.

THE NUMBER of classified contracts at U-M has declined in the past decade from 12 to two. The two projects were valued at \$368,000 in the 1984-85 academic year, compared to a total research budget of \$153 million for the same year.

In addition, U-M researchers are now involved in five "Star Wars" research contracts totaling \$643,696. Five more proposals totaling \$4,711,614 are being considered.

Over the next five years an estimated \$600 million will be given to universities by the federal government for "Star Wars" research.

Last September, the U-M regents passed a resolution supporting "Star Wars" research on campus. Students and faculty members protesting such research have been circulating petitions since October, but the regents have given no indication they will vote to reverse their resolution.

MUCH OF the increase in defense-related and classified research is being prompted by the Reagan administration's "Star Wars" missile defense plan. Just as significant is the growth of contracts between academics and the CIA or private corporations.

In an interview published by The New York Times, Robert Gates, the Deputy Director of Intelligence, reportedly confirmed that the CIA was making a broad effort to establish ties with academics. He said about one-fourth of the agency's intelligence estimates now are reviewed by professors or other outside experts.

Private companies are also funding their share of classified research at universities. For example, the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) is spending approximately \$15 million at Brown University and \$20 million at Carnegie-Mellon University in secret projects involving the use of microcomputer networks.

PROFESSORS ALSO can bend the rules themselves while remaining tied to a university that has classified research guidelines. At most universities, professors are allowed several

days a month to do outside consulting that is not governed by university research restrictions. They also can take leaves of absence to work with the government or a private corporation on research that might not be permitted by their university.

University administrators say that safeguards are built into the system to prevent abuses of research privileges.

Garrett Heberlein, vice-president of research and dean of the graduate school at Wayne State University, said:

"If a researcher is doing defense work that could be used for killing, then we're eventually going to find out by the nature of the articles he publishes. And if he doesn't publish, he's not going to get merit money for his research or promotion or tenure."

Some top-notch research schools have no qualms about supporting classified research related to national defense. At Pennsylvania State University, each professor decides whether he wants to do classified research.

"WE THINK it's a very healthy attitude," said David R. Schuckers, a Washington lobbyist for Penn State, where much U.S. naval research is conducted.

Such an attitude would be considered very strange by many at the University of Michigan. Most officials close to the debate there do not feel there will be a radical revision of the present guidelines.

"I suspect we will probably recommend some loosening here and some tightening there," said Committee Chairman Philip Converse.

Professor Neel said that the integrity of the researchers, not guidelines, is what will ultimately preserve the humanistic traditions of universities.

"In a series of steps almost anything involving basic research can go in the direction of killing and maiming," Neel said. "If you don't believe that, look at Einstein. All he did was come up with a formula that said that nuclear power was possible. In the end it all comes down to the integrity of the people."